

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PCAT, PARM, UR, US
SUBJ: INDIAN OCEAN

1. AFTER MY PRIVATE CAT MEETING WITH MENDELEVICH, HE ASKED ME TO STAY ON A MOMENT LONGER AND ASKED, "TELL ME WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON WITH RESPECT TO THE INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS."

2. I SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO BROAD KINDS OF CONSIDERATIONS. FIRST, EXACTLY AS WE HAVE TOLD YOU, WE ARE WAITING FOR THE SITUATION IN AFRICA TO BE CLARIFIED, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES AND CUBAN COMBAT PRESENCE IN EITHIOPIA. I SAID THIS WAS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER FOR US, IN POLICY TERMS AND IN POLITICAL TERMS. HE INTERRUPTED TO SAY, "IT IS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THE CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA; WE HAVE TO RESTRAIN THEM FROM WANTING TO FIGHT IN ERITREIA." I SAID WE FIND IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY THIS SHOULD BE SO DIFFICULT. HE LAUGHED AND SAID, "BUT IT IS." I CONTINUED SAYING EXACTLY AS WE HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE, THERE IS ALSO THE QUESTION OF THE LEVEL OF YOUR NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE AREA. IT HAS COME DOWN TO LEVELS CONSISTENT WITH THE RECENT PAST, BUT WE HAVE NO ASSURANCES THAT IT WILL REMAIN THERE. HE RESPONDED THAT SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE WAS WHOLLY CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PROPOSAL FOR AVERAGING PRESENCE OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD. I SAID THAT HIS ANSWER WAS
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ONE OF OUR PROBLEMS, NAMELY, THAT WE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS AN ACCURATE WAY TO CALCULATE PRESENCE. BUT, THAT AT ANY RATE, IF THE LEVELS STAYED DOWN ABOUT WHERE THEY ARE NOW, I AM SURE THAT WE WOULD TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT.

3. THE SECOND GENERAL CONSIDERATION I SAID, WAS A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES IN OUR VARIOUS ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS.

TATIONS. I SAID THAT WE HOPED THAT SALT AND CTB COULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. THIS, WE ASSUMED WAS THE SOVIET GOAL AS WELL. IF THESE AGREEMENTS WERE TO BE CONSUMMATED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, WE WOULD HAVE TO SEND THEM TO THE CONGRESS FOR APPROVAL. ALMOST ALL OF OUR RESOURCES AND ENERGIES WOULD HAVE TO BE DEVOTED TO THIS EFFORT. I CONCLUDED THAT I WAS SURE THE SOVIETS WOULD ALSO UNDERSTAND AND AGREE WITH THESE PRIORITIES.

4. HE SAID, "THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THESE PRIORITIES ARE CORRECT, BUT WHAT BOTHERS US IS HYPOCRISY ON THE AMERICAN SIDE." ON THE ONE HAND, HE CONTINUED, CARTER AND VANCE STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE INDIAN NEGOTIATIONS ARE ON-GOING; AND ON THE OTHER HAND, VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, IN HIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPEECH STATED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INTERRUPTION OF THE TALKS. IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE, HE CONCLUDED, THAT THE TALKS WOULD BE HELD ABEYANCE, BUT IT WAS NOT UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE SOVIET SAID WAS BEING BLAMED FOR THIS.

5. HE THEN SUGGESTED THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

(1) NO PUBLIC STATEMENTS WITH ONE SIDE BLAMING THE OTHER FOR DELAY. "IF PRESIDENT CARTER IS AS COMMITTED TO THE INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS AS YOU HAVE JUST SAID, HE MUST REALIZE THAT MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS WOULD CLOUD THE ATMOSPHERE, AND THE CHANCES FOR AGREEMENT."

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MENT IN THE FUTURE WOULD DETERIORATE."

(2) IT WOULD BE VERY IMPORTANT FOR SECRETARY VANCE TO TELL THE FOLLOWING TO MINISTER GROMOKO WHEN THEY MEET IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER. "WE REMAIN DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS. THEY SHOULD BE RESUMED FORMALLY IN THE BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR. NEITHER SIDE SHOULD ACCUSE THE OTHER OF BAD FAITH IN THE INTERIM. THE U.S. WILL BE FOCUSING ITS ARMS CONTROL PRIORITIES ON SALT AND CTB." HE STRESSED THAT VANCE SHOULD RAISE THIS WITH GROMOKO, EVEN THOUGH HE (MENDELEVICH) HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID THAT GROMOKO WANTED TO RAISE THIS WITH VANCE IN GENEVA TWO WEEKS AGO.

(3) THERE MIGHT BE SIMPLY A HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING RIGHT AFTER THE NEXT CAT ROUND IN DECEMBER. "THIS COULD BE A VERY BRIEF TWO SESSIONS TO REVIEW WHERE WE ARE AND TO DISCUSS WHAT WILL COME NEXT -- AND I BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL FIND WHAT I HAVE TO SAY VERY PROMISING."

(4) WE CAN AGREE TO MEET AGAIN FORMALLY SOMETIME

NEXT JANUARY "OR SO."

6. I SAID I WOULD RELY ALL THIS.
FRY

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